

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

744 P Street, Sacramento, CA 95814



April 29, 1988

ALL-COUNTY INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 1-35-88

TO: ALL COUNTY WELFARE DIRECTORS
ALL PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ADOPTION AGENCIES
ALL SDSS ADOPTION DISTRICT OFFICES

SUBJECT: CALIFORNIA LONG-RANGE ADOPTION STUDY

This letter is to inform you about the California Long-Range Adoption Study being conducted by the University of California, Berkeley, and to alert you to forthcoming requests for your assistance in obtaining the sample population for this study.

There are many unanswered questions about the long-term outcomes of adoptive placements. To answer these questions, the School of Social Welfare at the University of California at Berkeley is preparing to conduct a longitudinal study of California adoptive placements. This study will follow a large group of adoptees for several decades. Richard Barth, DSW, an associate professor at the School of Social Welfare who has significant experience in adoption research, will be the principal researcher. Findings of the study will be disseminated as often as practical to adoption professionals. We expect these findings to make a significant contribution to adoption practice in the twenty-first century.

Examples of questions which the study will address include: How do "open" adoptions affect the adopted children's identity and loyalty to the adoptive family, especially in adolescence? How do abused, troubled, and older child placements fare after ten and twenty years? What happens to children whose adoptions are disrupted? How do drug addicted adopted babies develop into adulthood? The researchers are open to input from adoption agencies regarding issues to be studied and expect that questions will be added in future years as new issues arise.

Until now, high quality adoption research has been difficult to conduct because of the confidential nature of adoption records. Unable to develop random samples of adopting families, researchers in the past have had to rely on self-selected samples--often of adult adoptees who have been unhappy about their adoption experience. To overcome this problem, the study will develop a large, representative sample of adoptive families as willing participants. The achievement of this goal, and thus the value of the research, will depend upon adoption agencies' efforts to encourage families to agree to participate in the study.

All adopting families in agency, intercountry, and independent California adoptions from the 1988-89 Fiscal Year should be asked to participate. This sample can be obtained only with the assistance of all California adoption agencies. Specifically, agencies will be asked to give each adopting family the opportunity to sign an authorization allowing the agency to give the family's name and address to the University. All further contact regarding the study will be made by the University.

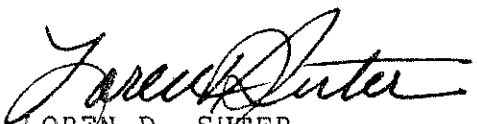
The research team will contact the family and describe more about the study to the family. The family will be asked to complete a questionnaire approximately every five years. Some families will be asked to participate in interviews. Families may decline to participate at any point in the study.

The privacy of the adoptive families will be strictly protected. Their names and addresses, and other identifying information, will not be released by the researchers. The birth parents' names and the child's birth name will not be given to the University.

Adoption agencies also are asked to suggest persons to serve as members of an advisory group to ensure that the procedure for obtaining parental consent is running smoothly and that the research addresses questions that are central to adoption agencies' interests.

I wish to emphasize the fact that the success of this important study depends on the willingness and commitment of adoption agency staff to "go the extra mile" in encouraging families to complete the authorization form. A future All-County Information Notice will provide specific instructions regarding this process.

Questions and suggestions regarding advisory group members should be addressed to Dr. Richard Barth at the University of California, Berkeley at (415) 642-8535 (ATSS 582-8535), Ms. Joan Allen at the Department's Berkeley District Adoptions Office at (415) 450-2028 (ATSS 571-2028) or Mr. Joe Magruder in the Adoptions Policy Bureau at (916) 323-0524 (ATSS 473-0524).



LOREN D. SUTER
Deputy Director
Adult and Family Services

cc: CWDA